

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The office action of April 11, 2005 has been carefully reviewed and these remarks are responsive thereto. Reconsideration and allowance of the instant application are respectfully requested. Claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 14, 22, 23, 25-27, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37 and 42 remain pending in this application. Claim 1, 4, 7-13, 15-21, 24, 28-30 and 32, 35 and 38-41 have been canceled without prejudice and disclaimer and new claims 43-46 have been added.

Preliminarily, applicants note with appreciation the indication that the application contains allowable subject matter. Specifically, claims 14, 27, 31 and 42 have been objected to for being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if amended to incorporate all the features of their ultimate base claim and any intervening claims. As amended claims 2, 3, 5 and 6, ultimately depend from claim 14, claims 22, 23, 25 and 26, ultimately depend from claim 27, and claims 33, 34, 36 and 37, ultimately depend from claim 31. Each of these dependent claims is believed to be allowable for the same reasons as their respective ultimate base claim, and further in view of the novel features recited therein. New claims 43-46 ultimately depend from claim 31 and respectively correspond to claims 22, 23, 25 and 26, and are believed to be allowable for the same reasons as their respective ultimate base claim, and further in view of the novel features recited therein.

Claims 1-8, 21-26, 28 and 32-39 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. patent no. 5,188,976 to Kume et al. (“Kume”) in view of JP 3-196677 to Soeda and claims 9, 13, 29, 30, 40 and 41 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kume in view of Soeda and further in view of the prior art shown in Fig. 3 (“Fig. 3”). Notwithstanding the merits, the rejection is deemed moot as the claims have been amended to expedite prosecution and place the application in immediate condition for allowance.

Appln. No.: 09/028,276
Amendment dated July 11, 2005
Reply to Office Action of April 11, 2005

CONCLUSION

It is believed that no fee is required for this submission. If any fees are required or if an overpayment is made, the Commissioner is authorized to debit or credit our Deposit Account No. 19-0733, accordingly.

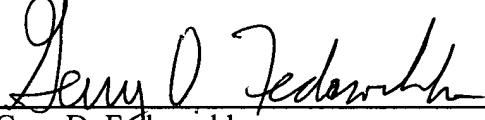
All rejections having been addressed, applicants respectfully submit that the instant application is in condition for allowance, and respectfully solicit prompt notification of the same.

Respectfully submitted,

BANNER & WITCOFF, LTD.

Dated: July 11, 2005

By:



Gary D. Fedorochko
Registration No. 35,509

1001 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001-4597
Tel: (202) 824-3000
Fax: (202) 824-3001

GDF:lab